



Talking with your kids about  
**crystal meth**  
and other drugs

# Why about



# talk

# it?

**Methamphetamine**, or crystal meth, is a dangerous, highly addictive drug. It's cheap, widely available and making inroads among young people. Sooner or later, your kids could be asked to try it.

When that happens, you want them to be able to say a firm “no” to this dangerous drug. Your opinion is going to make a big difference for them. Knowing where you stand can give them the confidence – and the facts – they need to make the right choice.

As one parent put it, “Where would I rather my daughter got her information about crystal meth?  
*From someone trying to sell it to her or from me?”*

Studies consistently show that kids whose parents talk to them about the dangers of drugs are significantly less likely to use illicit drugs than kids whose parents do not.



# You don't need to be an expert to **start a conversation**

You can make the conversation as casual as you want. You don't need to have all the facts; looking up the answer to your kids' questions together can be a helpful part of the process.

The important thing is to be honest about how you feel and to communicate a message clearly:

**Crystal meth is a dangerous, addictive drug that can do permanent damage.**

**I don't want you using it because I love you and I care what happens to you.**

This can be the first of many ongoing conversations you have with your kids about crystal meth and other drugs over the coming months and years.



# 1 Before you talk



There will never be a perfect occasion for this conversation so don't put it off. If the right opportunity doesn't come up, then create it yourself.

- **Look for somewhere private. Kids will be more open to what you say if others aren't watching or listening.**
- **Make sure you can avoid distractions like phones or television.**
- **Consider having the conversation somewhere your daughter or son will feel comfortable and unthreatened, such as their room.**
- **Take some time for yourself to think about what you'll say, how your child is likely to react and how you'll respond.**
- **Find out from your kids' teachers what they've already covered in school about drugs in general, and crystal meth in particular.**
- **If you have more than one child, consider talking with them together as well as one-on-one.**

# 2 Getting started



Sometimes there's an obvious opening for a conversation. You may have seen a news item together on TV, or heard that your child's class discussed crystal meth recently.

Other times you need to start cold. **“I want to talk to you about crystal meth. I think you need to know about how dangerous it is.”**

Another option is to give your child this booklet to read and then follow up to discuss it afterwards.

## Meth facts

- **Crystal meth is highly addictive** and the addiction takes hold very quickly. Addicts begin to “binge and crash,” taking more of the drug more often.
- Crystal meth is sometimes called jib, crank, meth, crystal, ice, glass, chalk or speed.
- Users swallow, inhale, smoke or inject it.
- While someone is high on crystal meth, their judgment is severely impaired. They're a lot more likely to make very bad decisions – including taking other dangerous drugs and engaging in unprotected sex.
- Methamphetamine use is still fairly uncommon among kids. The latest figures for Manitoba show that about three per cent of high school students tried the drug in the past year.

*Source: Alcohol and Other Drug Use in Manitoba Students Report by the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, 2005*



# facial lesions



# 3

## During the conversation

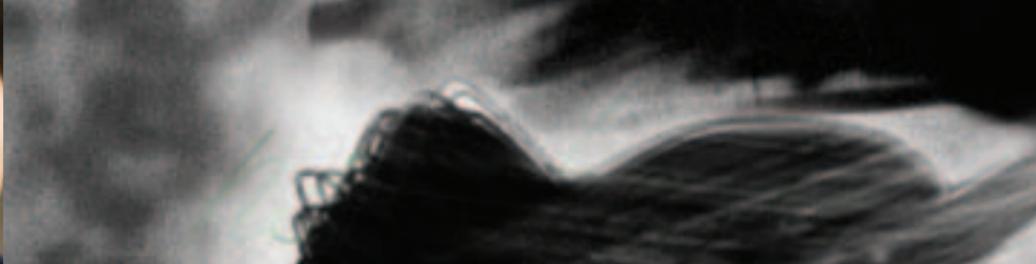


Ask your child or teen whether they've heard of crystal meth and what they think of it. Listen carefully to the answers and take a moment before you respond to them.

Let them know about the damage that crystal meth does. (See "Meth facts" on page seven.)

Don't feel uncomfortable about a few moments of silence in your conversation, especially after you've asked a question (or received a very short answer). Your son or daughter may be working up the courage to tell you something important.





It's okay if your child does not agree with everything you say. Make sure they understand where you stand and what you expect, but be prepared to have an open discussion.

Help your child learn to say “no” by rehearsing situations where they might be offered crystal meth: at a party, before a big exam, after school... she or he will probably be able to suggest other situations as well. Work out an answer that makes sense to your daughter or son.

Remember your most important message:

**Crystal meth is a dangerous, addictive drug that can do permanent damage.**

**I don't want you using it because I love you and I care what happens to you.**

# 4 After the conversation

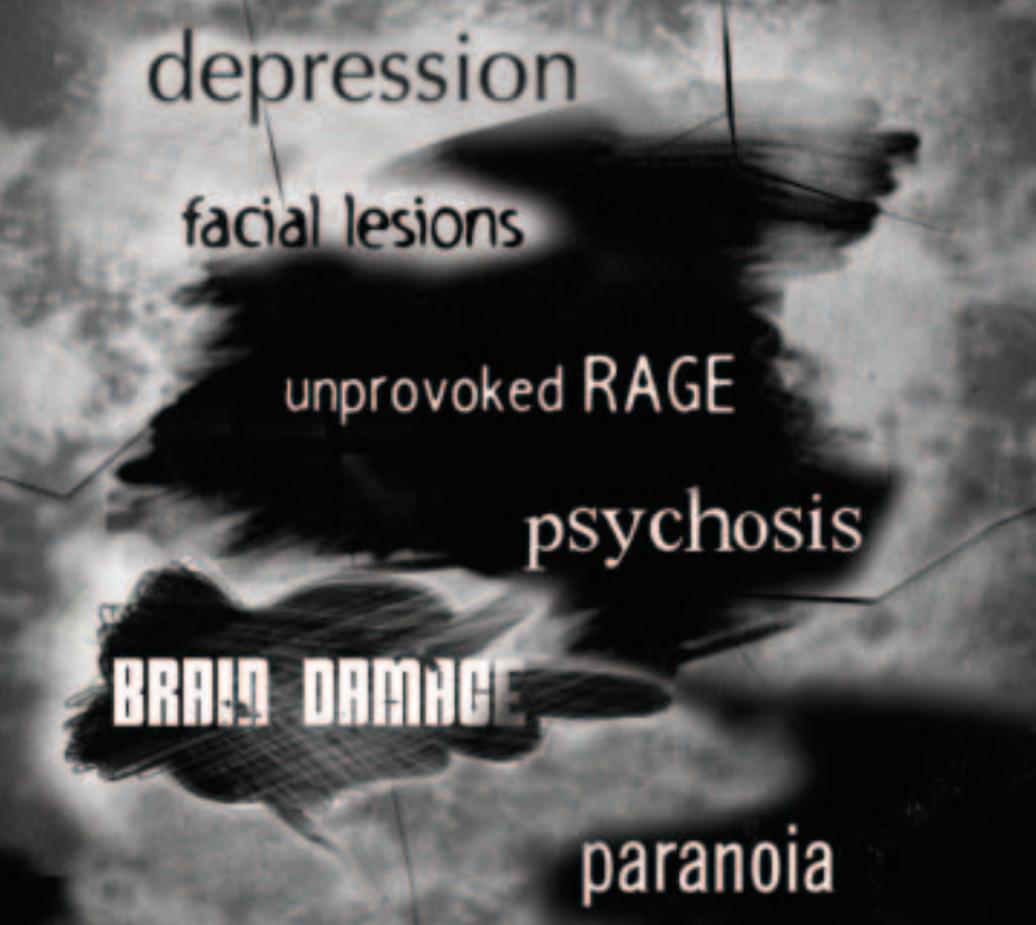


Keep looking for opportunities to talk with your child about crystal meth and other drugs (including alcohol and tobacco).

When you keep the channels of communication open, your son or daughter will use them to signal when they're wondering about something important or if they're in trouble. They may not always come right out and say it, so be prepared to ask gently when you sense something is wrong.

## **What your conversation achieves:**

- Your child or teen has the tools to say “no” when someone offers them crystal meth or another dangerous drug.
- You have a better sense of what your kid is thinking about on a very important issue.
- You have a stronger and more trusting relationship.



depression

facial lesions

unprovoked RAGE

psychosis

**BRAIN DAMAGE**

paranoia

### **Meth damage is severe**

The physical and mental damage it causes includes:

- brain damage
- heart damage
- depression
- paranoia
- psychosis
- rotting teeth
- extreme fever and convulsions
- bone erosion
- facial lesions
- panic attacks

# Other drugs



Crystal meth is only one of the drugs your child or teen may encounter. Remember that every conversation you have helps your child make the right decision. Here are some of the others you may want to discuss:

**MDMA** (or ecstasy, MDA, euphoria, X, XTC or adam) – A stimulant and hallucination-causing drug. Euphoria and energy can give way to memory loss, sleeplessness, recklessness, dehydration, uncontrollable jaw clenching and nausea. In high doses, ecstasy can cause heart disruption, stroke and death.

**GHB** (or liquid ecstasy) – A colourless, odorless liquid. GHB makes users feel euphoric but sleepy, so users often combine it with other drugs, with dangerous and unpredictable results. It can reduce heartbeat, cause your lungs to stop working and trigger seizures.

**Psilocybin** (or magic mushrooms) – Causes hallucinations. Only experts can tell the difference between lethal poisonous mushrooms and “magic” ones. (In case of poisoning, even a brief delay can kill; call 911 immediately and bring any samples of the mushroom to the hospital.)

**Cocaine** (or coke, snow, powder, sniff, blow, crack or crack cocaine) – A powerfully addictive stimulant drug, may come powdered or in a rock crystal form called crack. Causes constricted blood vessels, increased temperature, blood pressure and heart rate. Users can experience heart attack and stroke.





**Rohypnol** (roofie, roche, the “date rape drug”) – A tasteless, odorless tranquilizer. Because it causes sleepiness and memory loss, it is sometimes given to a victim in a drink by someone intending to commit sexual assault. Recently-made pills turn blue when dissolved but colourless tablets are still around.

**Ketamine** (special K, vitamin K, K, kitty) – Causes hallucinations and a sense of disconnection from the world. Ketamine is usually cooked into a white powder by dealers. It can disrupt your heart rate, depress your breathing and – especially in combination with other drugs – endanger your life.

**LSD** (acid, blotter) – A powerful drug that causes hallucinations, wild mood swings, panic attacks and profound feelings of fear and despair – not to mention fatal accidents. Users report “flashbacks,” where they experience the effects of LSD even if they haven’t taken the drug in over a year.

One key thing to remember about these and other illicit drugs: you never know what you’re getting. Even the person selling the drug may have been lied to about the ingredients or the size of the dose – and the results can range from severe illness to overdose and death.

## How the **Manitoba government** is fighting meth

We're taking action to cut off crystal meth at the source and ensure support is available to individuals and families affected by meth use. The province is:

- restricting the sale of 17 over-the-counter drugs containing pseudoephedrine, an ingredient used to make crystal meth;
- increasing funding for mental health and addictions programs;
- providing enhanced training for addictions and mental health front-line staff; and
- ensuring government, enforcement and other agencies work together to safely manage meth lab sites.

### Learn more about meth

If you think your child may be using meth, or if you need information urgently:

**Addictions Foundation of Manitoba**

**1-866-638-2568 (Winnipeg) 1-866-767-3838 (Brandon)**

**1-866-291-7774 (Thompson)**

**Behavioural Health Foundation**

**269-3430 (St. Norbert)**

**Native Addictions Council of Manitoba**

**586-8395 (Winnipeg)**

**The Salvation Army**

**946-9400 (Winnipeg)**

You can find out more online about crystal meth and its dangers. Be sure to get your information from dependable, authoritative sources. Here are some we recommend:

[www.afm.mb.ca](http://www.afm.mb.ca)

[www.gov.mb.ca/health/mh](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/mh)

[www.bhf.ca](http://www.bhf.ca)

[www.gov.mb.ca/healthschools/issues/substance.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthschools/issues/substance.html)

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